Three Roles of Automobiles in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Novels

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Introduction

In the 1920s, many changes occurred in America,[1] and the automobile was one of the causes of those changes. The automobile spread because it had become mass-produced and low-priced, and it enabled many people to expand their range of action easily. This cynosure of all eyes running around cities ushered in a new era of mass consumption and brought prosperity to the United States. "[As] a representative figure of the age" (Cowley, "Romance" 133) or the spokesman of the Jazz Age, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) described the atmosphere of the time vividly: the Patches in *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) go out in a car for a new start; in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), all the main characters have automobiles: Jay Gatsby has a cream Rolls-Royce[2] and a station wagon; Nick an old used Dodge[3]; Tom a blue coupé; and when Daisy was single, she drove around in a white road star.

The automobile partakes of its negative side; the increasing number of automobile accidents became a new symbol of violence and destruction. "Fitzgerald employs the automobile as part of a pattern of images embodying the disorder of the Twenties" (MacPhee 207), and "Fitzgerald primarily depicts it in negative terms" (Lance 25). Car accidents often happened around Fitzgerald,[4] and therefore, they seem to have influenced his works: "As evidence, gruesome automobile accidents that took place in Fitzgerald's early life unroll a traumatic template of auto accident death that he infused into his fiction" (Workman 85). In a June 1910 entry in his *Ledger*, a memorandum with his life record, "Mr. Shotwell killed" is written (164),[5] because he witnessed the accident at age 13.[6] The accident is reminiscent of Myrtle Wilson's death in *The Great Gatsby*; her dead body seems to have been evoked by Mr. Shotwell's injured body (Workman 89). Fitzgerald witnessed a car accident again when he was at Princeton:

During his last spring at Princeton, Fitzgerald was driving home after a gay evening in Lawrenceville,

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> when the car ahead of him skidded and one of the boys in it was hurled out, smashing his head on the curb. It was Fitzgerald's first encounter with violent death and he never got over it. It gave him a dramatic scene in *This Side of Paradise* and doubtless colored the automobile slaying of Tom Buchanan's mistress in *The Great Gatsby*. (Turnbull 343n)[7]

Although the author might have been traumatized by car accidents, he could make Myrtle's death, the "automobile slaying," shocking and tragic. An automobile accident is described in Fitzgerald's *Notebooks*: "I went on one of those Armistice Day bats and the girl I was with drove my car into a hotel lobby and knocked down a major" (107).

The automobile is one of the significant elements that led *The Great Gatsby* to be considered a work of literary merit. "Thus as object and metaphor the automobile pervades the moral and emotional texture of the novel"(Saposnik 183), and furthermore, "The characters are visibly represented by the cars they drive" (Cowley, "Romance" 139). In addition, Jacqueline Lance summarizes the role of automobiles in *The Great Gatsby*: "Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald consistently uses the automobile as a vehicle to reveal the carelessness and materialism of his characters and he extends the scope of the automobile to that most feared and mysterious human condition of all, death" (29).

Having experienced car accidents, Fitzgerald described them in his short stories as well as in his novels.[8] Nevertheless, little weight is given to studies on automobiles in novels other than in *The Great Gatsby*. In addition, the roles of automobiles in *The Great Gatsby* have rarely been discussed in relation to those in other novels. It is necessary to consider automobiles in the whole works of Fitzgerald comprehensively, especially in his novels. This paper discusses the role of automobiles and what car accidents mean in all his novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby,* and *Tender Is the Night* (1934).

Cars Reflecting the Times

Cars Romantic

After the First World War ended, many people in the USA felt released and somewhat freed from oppression. Furthermore, Henry Ford enabled more middle class Americans to buy automobiles, and young people could freely go out to places beyond the eyeshot of their parents. The automobile was not only a means of transportation but was also a means for romance: "Daughters of the most exemplary parents" "[went] out joyriding with men," and they were said "in parked cars to engage in the unspeakable practice of petting and necking" (Alen 75); "Meanwhile a new sort of freedom was being made possible by the enormous increase in the use of the automobile, and particularly of the closed car. [. . .] The automobile offered an almost universally available means of escaping temporarily from the supervision of parents and chaperons, or from the influence of neighborhood opinion" (83). The closed car gave young men and women secret rooms behind their parents' back.

Fitzgerald was sensitive to the atmosphere of those days—"More than any other writer of those times, Fitzgerald had the sense of living in history" (Cowley, "Act" 53). Like Alen, Fitzgerald comprehended how automobiles provided couples with private rooms shut off from the outer world to help their romance develop—"The intimacy of the car, its four walls whisking them along toward a new adventure, had drawn them together" (*Notebooks* 71).[9] In his 1931 essay "Echoes of the Jazz Age," he also recalls the days with such an atmosphere (131).

In his works, Fitzgerald describes cars as a space for romance. For example, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony Patch kisses Geraldine in a taxi; in "Winter Dreams" (1922), Dexter Green and Judy Jones leave the party and go out in "a coupé" (59). In *The Great Gatsby*, "There seems to be no exception to this pattern in which relationships begin in vehicles" (Takeuchi 200-01). Daisy Fey was sitting in "a little white roadster" (59) with lieutenant Gatsby while still at her home in Louisville in October 1917, before Gatsby went to war. "[They] had driven [to the out-of-the-way places] in her white car" (119). Jordan Baker reports "The officer looked at Daisy while she was speaking, in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at sometime, and because it seemed romantic to me I have remembered the incident ever since" (60). When Nick Carraway and Jordan are "driving in a Victoria through Central Park" (62), he draws her close, holds her tightly, and kisses her for the first time (63). Moreover, after the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom Buchanan at the Plaza, when Nick and Jordan are in Tom's driving car, her face gets close to Nick again, and they hold hands: "As we passed over the dark bridge her wan face fell lazily against my coat's shoulder" (106). Although the Buchanans and the Wilsons are married, they do not ride in the same car. Those couples do not seem to be intimate in *The Great Gatsby*. In addition,"Given their [the Buchanans'] avoidance of sharing the same car, it seems that vehicles in the novel reflect only transient or even illicit relationships" (Takeuchi 201).

Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald's longest novel, has most kinds of the cars in his work. After the First World War, Dick Diver meets patient Nicole Warren again at Dohmler's clinic on the Zürichsee. She often plays records for him, and one of the popular songs says, "they went down to meet each other in a taxi, honey"(156).[10] Before meeting Dick, actress Rosemary Hoyt used to think Collis Clay, her friend and college student, was "attractive," and "once they held hands in an automobile going from New Haven to New York" (80). Thus, in Fitzgerald's work, the automobile significantly contributes to the development of couples'relationships.

Dangerous Liaisons in Cars

In some scenes of Fitzgerald's works, stark realities seem to be connected with romantic things. When Nick Carraway sees George Wilson's deserted garage, "It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead" (22). Furthermore, romantic scenes often hide something horrifying or grotesque behind them—"The romantic aura of Fitzgerald's novel belies the current of violence that runs beneath it" (Lehan 121). Automobiles sometimes provide room for unfor-

giveable romance. In *The Great Gatsby*, after Myrtle Wilson happens to meet Tom Buchanan in a train for New York, she does not take a usual subway there; instead, they take a taxi, which leads to their love affair. In *Tender Is the Night*, Nicole's father Devereux Warren confesses to Dr. Dohmler the beginning of his incest with his daughter Nicole, "Oh, after that [his wife died], whenever we went places in an automobile or a train we used to hold hands" (148-49), "and then all at once we were lovers" (149). Automobiles seemed to bring them closer together and encouraged them to engage in forbidden love.

Dick Diver and Rosemary Hoyt develop their secret love in an automobile. In the opening of *Tender Is the Night*, Rosemary goes to stay at Gausse's Hôtel des Étrangers in the Riviera with her mother to recuperate.[11] She falls in love with Dick on the beach at first sight and tries to draw attention from him. Although he also gets interested in her, he tries to keep his distance from her and acts with great discretion because he is already married to Nicole. However, Dick finally gets to have a fling with Rosemary. After they visit "a house hewn from the frame of Cardinal de Retz's palace in the Rue Monsieur" (83), they leave in a taxi:

> "I'm afraid I'm in love with you," said Dick, "and that's not the best thing that could happen."
>
> Again the names—then they lurched together as if the taxi had swung them. Her breasts crushed flat against him, her mouth was all new and warm, owned in common. They stopped thinking with an almost painful relief, stopped seeing; they only breathed and sought each other. (86)

They start having an affair in a taxi, partly because Dick is exhausted from his life with Nicole and partly because they feel a sense of release from the grotesque sight in the house. After they have a good time at a "houseboat café" on the Seine (71), they go back to their hotel in a taxi: "Suddenly she came toward him, her youth vanishing as she passed inside the focus of his eyes and he had kissed her breathlessly as if she were any age at all. Then she lay back against his arm and sighed" (74). He has to take a cautious attitude toward his relationship with Rosemary, but the room of a car makes him lose self-control; rather, he seems to try actively to maintain the relationship.

Dick sees Rosemary again by chance. After he makes a short return to his country to attend his father's funeral, Dick comes to Europe again and checks into the Hotel Quirinale in Rome. He sees her again at the check-in counter, and they spend the afternoon together in her room until dinner, but their relationship does not become closer. The next day, the situation changes drastically. They drive to her movie studio, eat lunch, and move again in a car: "Afterward they drove back to the hotel, all flushed and happy, in a sort of exalted quiet. She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last" (242). They are "all flushed and happy" in a car and start to have an illicit affair again.

While married, Dick becomes intimate not only with Rosemary in his car, but also other women as well. Since Nicole's sister Baby Warren supports Dick financially, he opens and manages a clinic with his partner

Franz Gregorovious. One day, Dick receives a letter from a female ex-patient that "accused him in no uncertain terms of having seduced her daughter" (213). He drove with the daughter and carelessly kissed her once: "Upon a single occasion he had let the girl, a flirtatious little brunette, ride into Zürich with him, upon her request, and in the evening had brought her back to the clinic. In an idle, almost indulgent way, he kissed her" (213).

Furthermore, the relationship between Nicole and Tommy Barban develops rapidly in a car. When Dick is out, Nicole goes out to Nice with Tommy in a car:

> A little later, riding toward Nice, she thought: So I have white crook's eyes, have I? Very well then, better a sane crook than a mad puritan.
>
> His assertion seemed to absolve her from all blame or responsibility and she had a thrill of delight in thinking of herself in a new way. New vistas appeared ahead, peopled with the faces of many men, none of whom she need obey or even love. She drew in her breath, hunched her shoulders with a wriggle and turned to Tommy.
>
> "Have we *got* to go all the way to your hotel at Monte-Carlo?"
>
> He brought the car to a stop with a squeak of tires.
>
> "No!" he answered. "And, my God, I have never been so happy as I am this minute." (328)

On the way to his hotel, Nicole turns aggressive in Tom's car and hopes that her relationship with him will deepen, partly because she is tired of her life with Dick and partly because she feels a sense of release from her familiar environment. Therefore, in Fitzgerald's work, when couples are put in the closed space of a car, they often feel excited, and their relationship develops further. In addition, such situations sometimes encourage couples to commit adultery.

A Symbol of the Rich

Two Custom Cars

Two luxury cars appear in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night.* In *The Great Gatsby*, "At nine o'clock one morning late in July," Gatsby stops by at Nick's house in his car and sounds "a burst of melody from its three noted horn" (51). "It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town" (51). His car is a huge cream-colored custom Rolls-Royce, not a familiar Silver Ghost.

Although his car is luxurious, it looks too ostentatious and has a low market value. One day, Tom, not Gatsby, drives the car, stops by at George Wilson's garage to refuel it, and jokingly talks him into buying it; however, the mechanic replies to Tom, "Big chance. [. . .] No, but I could make some money on the other

[Tom's car]" (96). The "cream color," evoking gold or richness, echoes his "gold colored tie" (66), which he wears when he sees Daisy again at Nick's house.[12] The huge car body is a way to display the wealth like his mansion or lavish party held in his garden every weekend. In short, his car exhibits the conspicuous consumption of the leisure class[13] and is a symbol of new money. Finally, Daisy, "the golden girl" whose "voice is full of money" (94), hits Myrtle Wilson and drives away in Gatsby's golden car.[14]

Gatsby's ostentation is highlighted when his foreign luxury custom car is compared with horses. Tom, who contemptuously calls Gatsby's car a "circus wagon" (94), believes that a horse is more valuable than an automobile is. While Gatsby ironically introduces Tom Buchanan as "Polo player" to his party guests (82), Tom shows off his horse, not his "blue coupé" (97), to Gatsby: "but I'm the first man who ever made a stable out of a garage" (92). One day, Tom and his friends ride horses and unexpectedly stop by at Gatsby's mansion on the way home. One of them invites Gatsby to her party, but he cannot follow them immediately: "I've never bought a horse. I'll have to follow you in my car" (80). While Gatsby is out to take his car, they rudely leave him without expressing words of gratitude. This episode shows that although Gatsby has a Rolls-Royce, he cannot catch up with them; in other words, even if he can be rich enough to buy such a luxury car, he is not even allowed to enter the Buchanans' world.

In *Tender Is the Night*, an automobile is also a symbol of wealth. Chapter 6 of Book 3 describes Dick's car, which is euphemistically called "the Shah of Persia" in this way:

> The car had been built on a special chassis in America. Its wheels were of silver, so was the radiator. The inside of the body was inlaid with innumerable brilliants which would be replaced with true gems by the court jeweller when the car arrived in Teheran the following week. There was only one real seat in back, because the Shah must ride alone, so they took turns riding in it and sitting on the marten fur that covered the floor. (89)

It should be noted that Dick Diver's and Gatsby's wealth are fundamentally different. Whereas Gatsby purchases a car so that Daisy will take some interest in him again, Dick owns a car to entertain his friends. In addition, it is true that Dick's car is a luxury custom car like Gatsby's, but the car emphasizes how incompetent he is financially. Unlike Gatsby, Dick has no way to earn enough money to buy such a car, and he could not drive it without his wife's support. His car is a facet of his extravagant lifestyle that exhibits vicarious consumption.[15] Dick can drive around in a luxury car and enjoy a fulfilling and charmed life because he married Nicole.

Abandoned Cars, Walking, and Bicycles

Through automobiles, Fitzgerald also shows the gap between the rich and the poor. In *The Great Gatsby*, George Wilson runs his garage, but does not drive. Probably, he does not even have his own car. He goes on

foot to find and kill Gatsby after his wife is killed. "[The] Wilson's low social and economic status is advertised by their lack of a running automobile" (Lance 26). Although a car is in his garage, it does not seem to run: "The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner" (22). The old Ford is abandoned, and it seems to have no market value. "This dilapidated vehicle represents the physical, emotional, economic, and marital deterioration present in Wilson's own life" (Lance 27). The car might be identified with George Wilson.

George lives in a dump for New York City called "the valley of ashes" (21). Although he works around the clock refueling and repairing customers' cars, George cannot afford to live a comfortable life and execute his plan to move to live in the West with his wife Myrtle. He cannot escape from the Valley and seems to be confined to it like the abandoned Ford—George "is trapped underneath the grim reality of his life in the valley of the ashes" (Lance 26). While Gatsby's luxury car and Tom's blue coupé speed, Wilson's old Ford cannot run and escape from his poor garage.

The automobile illustrates how miserable George Wilson is. He wants to resell Tom's car and make a profit, but Tom does not think of him as his business partner. While George's wife has a love affair with rich Tom Buchanan, George refuels Tom's car and tries to please him. Finally, Gatsby's car, a car which Wilson himself refueled, hits and kills his wife. Wilson, filled with sadness and misunderstanding, shoots Gatsby and then himself.

The abandonment of cars implies a return to a previous life. In *The Great Gatsby*, when Nick leaves the East to return to his hometown in the West, he sells his "old Dodge" (7) to the grocer (140), which he bought in the East. In *Tender Is the Night*, a car is contrasted with a bicycle. When Dick was single, he would ride a bicycle. One day, Dick makes a plan to go to the summit of a mountain with a bicycle and ride down the mountain. However, Nicole's sister Baby Warren forced him to give up his cycling: "Can you let Nicole ride as far as Zürich with you [. . .] and drop her at the sanitarium?" when "Dick was furious—Miss Warren had known he had a bicycle with him; yet she had so phrased her note that it was impossible to refuse. Throw us together!" (180). He abandons his cycling and goes down on a cable car with Nicole. He starts to drive a car after marrying her, but after his divorce, he rides a bicycle again.

Dick's abandonment of a car shows his decision to divorce Nicole. One day, Dick sees Rosemary off in his car and returns home in a taxi. When Nicole sees him coming home and asks, "Where's the car?" Dick replies, "I left it in Arles. I didn't feel like driving any more" (334). Furthermore, when Tommy suddenly forces Dick to start the discussion of the Divers' divorce at the Café des Alliés on the Croisette, Dick has a greater interest in a group of cyclists who are passing beside them than in the discussion:

> A troupe of fifty more swarmed after the first bicycle racers, strung out over two hundred yards; a few were smiling and self-conscious, a few obviously exhausted, most of them indifferent and weary. A retinue of

> small boys passed, a few defiant stragglers, a light truck carried the dupes of accident and defeat. They were back at the table. Nicole wanted Dick to take the initiative, but he seemed content to sit with his face half-shaved matching her hair half-cut. (346)

Dick looks like one of "the dupes of accident and defeat" after the bicycle racers, whom a light truck carried. He used to be a cyclist but does not ride a bicycle any longer; instead, he seems to be put on "the truck" supported by the finances of the Warrens. Dick later gets out of the truck and rides a bicycle again. On the day he leaves Nicole, Baby says sarcastically about him, "We should have let him confine himself to his bicycle excursions. [. . .] When people are taken out of their depths they lose their heads" (349). Her remark suggests that he should ride a bicycle, not a car, and she boasts of her financial advantage over him. Dick Diver bicycles around again in America after abandoning his car and divorcing Nicole:

> By accident she heard more about his life there [in Lockport] than anywhere: that he bicycled a lot, was much admired by the ladies, and always had a big stack of papers on his desk that were known to be an important treatise on some medical subject, almost in process of completion. He was considered to have fine manners and once made a good speech at a public-health meeting on the subject of drugs. (352)

Careless Driving and Car Accidents

Signs of Disasters

In Fitzgerald's work, careless driving often leads to car accidents. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the Patches go out "in a cheap but sparkling new roadster" (149) to find a new house.[16] Since "Gloria was a driver of many eccentricities and of infinite carelessness" (150), Anthony tries to stop her bad driving: "He warned her of railroad-tracks; he pointed out approaching automobiles; finally he insisted on taking the wheel." "[A] furious, insulted" Gloria cannot accept his advice, and "the car joined the laundry bags and Gloria's appetite as one of the trinity of contention" (151). Finally, careless driver Gloria causes an accident: "Then Gloria, hesitating between two approaches, and making her choice too late, drove over a fire-hydrant and ripped the transmission violently from the car" (152), before she says, "We broke down. [. . .] I drove over a fire-hydrant and we had ourselves towed to the garage and then we saw your sign" (152). Thus, the Patches' car is broken and towed.

The Patches spend two years in the Colonial grey house, but the new house does not improve their lives. Instead, they are ruining themselves, and their lives are getting worse and worse. Anthony regrets the fruitlessness of his life and determines the cause: "Pelham! They had quarrelled in Pelham because Gloria must drive. And when she set her little foot on the accelerator the car had jumped off spunkily, and their two heads had jerked back like marionettes worked by a single string" (236-37). He concludes: "That darn car was an expense from start to finish" (241). Anthony's car leads them to the house, and that car accident foreshadows their ruin.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald understood quite well that the car accident in Chapter 7 holds the key to the success of the novel because it is an important scene leading to Gatsby's death. Fitzgerald did not only make the accident itself terrible, but also gave many events of careless driving and car accidents that foreshadow it. Gatsby, Tom, Daisy, and Jordan drive carelessly. Gatsby goes to New York in his huge Rolls-Royce with Nick. On the way, a motorcycle officer stops him for speeding. What is more, even if he drives carelessly, Gatsby can run away without being punished because he has a strong connection with the police—"I was able to do the commissioner a favor once, and he sends me a Christmas card every year" (54).

Jordan Baker also drives carelessly.[17] Her careless driving results from her character. "She was incurably dishonest" (47), and rumor has it that she cheated at a golf tournament. In Chapter 3, one day, when Jordan and Nick are invited to a home party in Warwick, her car almost runs over a workman; its fender flicks a button on his coat. As soon as Nick protests that she is a "rotten driver," Jordan says that other people must be careful and that "[it] takes two to make an accident" (48); therefore, she hopes not to meet careless drivers. Jordan is changing the point of an argument because "She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage" (48), but she unconsciously admits that she is a careless driver and that a car accident occurs if other drivers do not avoid her. Gatsby drives at breakneck speed, and Jordan runs without paying attention to a pedestrian.

As Victor Doyno points out (415-426), repeated accidents are highly characteristic of *The Great Gatsby*. In Chapter 3, Owl Eyes is involved in a car accident.[18] When Owl Eyes leaves Gatsby's party in a car, his driver mishandles and ruins his car:

> In the ditch beside the road, right side up but violently shorn of one wheel, rested a new coupé which had left Gatsby's drive not two minutes before. The sharp jut of a wall accounted for the detachment of the wheel which was now getting considerable attention from half a dozen curious chauffeurs. However, as they had left their cars blocking the road a harsh discordant din from those in the rear had been audible for some time and added to the already violent confusion of the scene (44).

The driver crashes his new coupé into "The sharp jut of a wall" and violently loses one wheel in a ditch. In addition, since the driver is drunken, he falsely believes that the car runs out of gas and cannot understand "that wheel and car were no longer joined by any physical bond" (45). People regard Owl Eyes as the driver at first, but later, they come to understand that the truth is otherwise.

In Fitzgerald's novels, people are often injured in car accidents. At Gatsby's party in Chapter 4, a drunken Ripley Snell, one of his guests, has a car accident—"Snell was there three days before he went to the penitentiary, so drunk out on the gravel drive that Mrs. Ulysses Swett's automobile ran over his right hand" (49-50). Tom also causes a car accident. In August, just after "a three months' trip to the South Seas" from June to August in 1919 (61), he already messes around with a chambermaid and takes her for a drive, when "Tom ran into

a wagon on the Ventura road one night and ripped a front wheel off his car. The girl who was with him got into the papers too because her arm was broken—she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel"(61). The woman breaks her arm, and the newspaper reports the accident.

In *The Great Gatsby*, all those car accidents augur the Myrtle's accident. Thus, in those accidents, some people are injured and some cars are ruined; a newspaper reports the crash, and an irrelevant man is regarded as the driver. In Myrtle's accident, her body is seriously hurt as if a broken car, the passenger (Gatsby) is mistaken for the true driver (Daisy), and a newspaper reports the accident.

A Well-studied Accident and the Aftereffect

The very plotting of the climactic incident involving Myrtle seems calculated by Fitzgerald. Careless driving and car accidents before the central car accident make that fatal accident more tragic. Daisy hits Myrtle and then runs away in Gatsby's striking car, which changes into a "death car" (107). Because Daisy sees the confrontation between Gatsby and her husband at Plaza, she gets nervous and cannot drive carefully. Gatsby has no habit to pay careful attention to driving as a motorcycle officer stops him for speeding. The accident inevitably happens:

> The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt in the road and mingled her thick, dark blood with the dust.
>
> Michaelis and this man reached her first but when they had torn open her shirtwaist still damp with perspiration they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long. (107)

Myrtle Wilson dies a tragic death. While Tom does not hesitate to beat Myrtle, who is "bleeding fluently" (32), Daisy hits Myrtle and runs away in Gatsby's cream Rolls-Royce, not in her husband's blue coupé. Myrtle falls down on the ground; her thick, dark blood mingling with the dust, her left breast severed loose, and her mouth "ripped" at the corners. Myrtle's body echoes the plight of Ripley Snell's body whose right hand is run over by an automobile. It also evokes the chambermaid's broken arm in Tom's car accident. Myrtle's damaged body also conjures memories of the car whose wheel is destroyed in Tom's accident: "[Tom] ripped a front wheel off his car." The word "rip" is repeated, and the refrain emphasizes the horror of the accident.

One of features in *The Great Gatsby* is the blunders in identification. Nick Carraway continues to talk to Gatsby as a stranger in his party for a while though he was formally invited. Such a mistake holds true for car accidents. Just like the guests at Gatsby's party mistake Owl Eyes for the driver in the accident, Myrtle rushes

out toward Gatsby's car mistakenly supposing it to be Tom's car. After the car accident, George erroneously identifies Tom as the criminal, and Tom falsely believes that the criminal is Gatsby. Tom intentionally gives George some wrong information, and George, "deranged by grief" (127), shoots Gatsby as the murderer. Gatsby becomes a substitute for Daisy, and he is shot to death as a substitute for Tom.

The car prevents Gatsby's dream from coming true. "In *The Great Gatsby*, [. . .] the machine represents the forces working against the dream of pastoral fulfillment" (Marx 358). Gatsby buys an ostentatious car to get Daisy's attention, and when he goes to New York in the car with Nick, Gatsby passes by a hearse (carriage) and a limousine on the Queensboro Bridge. After the car accident, Gatsby's car becomes broken, and then those cars catch up with him: a "motor hearse" (135-36) carries Gatsby to the cemetery, followed by his "limousine" and "Gatsby's station wagon" (136).[19] Gatsby lives a life with cars and dies with cars.

Trauma

In *This Side of Paradise*, Dick Humbird's car accident traumatizes Amory Blaine and lingers in his heart.[20] One story portends this accident. When he was a child in Lake Geneva, the hero was late for his friend's party on purpose and excuses himself:

> "Well—I'll tell you. I guess you don't know about the auto accident," he romanced.
> Myra's eyes opened wide.
> "Who was it to?"
> "Well," he continued desperately, "Uncle 'n Aunt 'n I."
> "Was anyone *killed*?" (17-18)

The car accident story was Amory's spur-of-the-moment lie, which was so obvious that "the Erse butler snickered" (18). It should be noted in this scene that Amory believes that a car accident was so terrible that his late attendance should be forgiven.

Amory is really involved in a car accident when he is at university. One day, he sneaks out of class and drives to New York with his friends: Alec Connage, Dick Humbird, Kerry Holiday, Fred Sloane, and Jesse Ferrenby. On the way back to Princeton, Dick Humbird dies because his car overturns at a curve. Since Amory is in another car, he barely averts the crisis.[21] Amory is fascinated with Dick's stately appearance and intelligence, regarding him as his ideal. Dick seems "a perfect type of aristocrat" (78), whose father succeeds in a real estate business in Tacoma. His careless driving with drinking causes a horrible accident:

> [. . .] and now he was this heavy, white mass. All that remained of the charm and personality of the Dick Humbird he had known—oh, it was all so horrible and unaristocratic and close to the earth. All tragedy has

> that strain of the grotesque and squalid—so useless, futile . . . the way animals die. . . . Amory was reminded of a cat that had lain horribly mangled in some alley of his childhood. (86)

Dick's tall, strong, dark skinned body changes into a dead mass. His hurt body reminds us of Myrtle's one.

The accident remains in Amory's mind. One day after the accident, he is alone in the graying alley and feels uneasy with fear. Amory, though he is too drunk, sees Dick's ghost: "Then something clanged like a low gong struck at a distance, and before his eyes a face flashed over the two feet, a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil that twisted it like flame in the wind; *but he knew, for the half-instant that the gong tanged and hummed, that it was the face of Dick Humbird*" (111). His death influenced Amory's campus life since then: "and like a somber background lay that incident of the spring before that filled half his nights with a dreary terror and made him unable to pray" (119). Amory does not forget Dick as he says to Alec, "Do you remember that party of ours, sophomore year? [. . .] Lord, Alec! It's hard to think that Jesse and Dick and Kerry are all three dead" (226). Amory longs for the glorious and brilliant world of the wealthy, but the accident implies that such a world is really easily broken and that something romantic is always next to something horrifying.[22]

In *The Great Gatsby*, the deaths of Myrtle, George, and Gatsby influence Nick. He is particularly shocked at Gatsby's death and fails to continue his life in the East. Before Myrtle's car accident, Nick is certainly accepting the life there—"I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye" (46). Furthermore, Nick even accepts Jordan's carelessness and starts to go out with her—"Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry, and then I forgot" (48). The accident makes Nick change his mind. He thinks that the cause of the accident derives from carelessness.

Carelessness applies not only to the Buchanans but also to Jordan. After Myrtle's death, the Buchanans remain unhurt and never feel remorse. Nick says, "They're a rotten crowd" (120) and concludes: "It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made . . ." (139). In *The Great Gatsby*, "rotten" is synonymous with "careless" as Nick feels that Jordan is "a rotten driver." Therefore, "they" in "they're a rotten crowd" refers to both the Buchanans and Jordan. In addition, the car accident is so appalling that he starts to feel a mental conflict. Since he has morality as well as "provincial squeamishness" (140), Nick wants to be honest—"I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known" (48). Nevertheless, Nick cannot confess the truth: the criminal is his relative, and what is more, he wants to respect Gatsby's will because Gatsby takes Daisy's crime on himself, and he is killed. Nick does not want to make Gatsby's girlfriend a criminal. Taking advantage of Nick's silence, the Buchanans "[retreat] back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together," and Jordan also fades out. Finally, Nick goes back to the West disappointed with carelessness in the

East as well as "careless people, Tom and Daisy" (139).

Gatsby believes that the "green light" on the deck across the bay is that of a traffic light, continues to drive carelessly, to win Daisy's love someday. However, Daisy would not continue to drive with Gatsby. "Daisy's plan [is] to engineer herself a flirtation—part of a gamble whose ultimate purpose is to rouse Tom's jealousy, bring their marriage to a crisis, and force her husband to choose between his wife and his dangerously aggressive mistress. [. . .] Like Wolfsheim, Daisy can 'use [Gatsby] good'" (Lockridge 170-71). Gatsby finally runs into the massive wall, facing harsh reality—"'Jay Gatsby' had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice" (115).

Nick Carraway must be most famous careful driver in Fitzgerald's work. He has "an old Dodge" (7), and since a Dodge was said to be a strong car for the middle class, it seems as if Nick was steady and reliable.[23] Actually, Nick is a driver who evades driving, rather than a careful driver; in addition, his surname Carraway insinuates this—car away. He rarely drives or gives anyone a drive. In Chapter 1, he visits the Buchanans; in Chapter 5, he goes to the West Egg Village to bring back his Finish housekeeper because Daisy will come to his house. Instead, Nick takes a taxi or train and rides in the cars of his friends such as Gatsby, Tom, and Jordan. Nick will not drive positively though he has a car. This suggests that he is a person who will not act positively. Seeking to control desire and impulse, Dick tries to take a cautious attitude toward everything—"But I am slow thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires" (48). Fitzgerald describes Nick's carefulness to emphasize the Buchanans' and Jordan's carelessness.

It should be noted that the car accident reveals the truth that Nick is also careless. In *The Great Gatsby*, while Nick criticizes the carelessness of the Buchanans and Jordan, he does not deal with the fatal accident carefully, and his behavior is not necessarily careful and honest. When Nick is leaving Jordan, she criticizes him: "You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn't I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride" (138). As her remark shows, "Jordan Baker has judged Carraway to be lacking in, of all things, his 'cardinal' virtue: honesty" (Lockridge 164). Jordan believes that Nick is "another bad driver," that is, careless and dishonest, and Nick cannot deny that.

Destruction of relationships

In *Tender Is the Night*, car accidents are regarded as one of the horrible accidents that humans experience. In Chapter 10 of Book 3, Mary North and Lady Caroline Sibley-Biers are held in custody for dressing up as sailors in Antibes. Dick receives an urgent call from the police at midnight, and then says to Nicole, "It's something serious—the agent wouldn't tell me; he kept saying 'pas de mortes—pas d'automobiles'" (338). Actually, the trouble has nothing to do with a car accident, and no one is dead, but the agent's report at midnight shows that a car accident is considered as serious as being dead; the two troubles have equal weight.

In *Tender Is the Night*, car accidents result in the destruction of human relations. Near the ending of Book 1, one Friday, the Divers hold a party at their home Villa Diana. After the party breaks up, the guests are divided into two groups; some ride on the Divers' "Isotta" and the others get in Earl Brady's car. In the Divers' car, Tommy Barban and Albert McKisco start to quarrel about the Divers' secret, Nicole's illness, because McKisco's wife Violet is about to reveal it. It is true that the quarrel does not cause a car accident to occur, but the car becomes a room for the passengers' confrontation. Consequently, the quarrel leads them to a shoot-out on a golf course early morning in the next day. In the gunfight, neither Tommy nor McKisco is wounded, but their relationship is broken completely like a damaged car in an accident.

The Divers'car is actually involved in an accident. One day, they go to the Ägeri Fair in his "Renault so dwarfish" (214). Nicole's illness recurs at the fair, and they decide to go home. An oppressive atmosphere already pervades the family: "the car was weighted with their mutual apprehension and anguish, and the children's mouths were grave with disappointment. Grief presented itself in its terrible, dark, unfamiliar color" (218). On the way home, Nicole, so full of emotion, suddenly grabs the "steering wheel," and their car nearly tumbles down:

> He had turned up a hill that made a short cut to the clinic, and now as he stepped on the accelerator for a short straightaway run parallel to the hillside the car swerved violently left, swerved right, tipped on two wheels and, as Dick, with Nicole's voice screaming in his ear, crushed down the mad hand clutching the steering wheel, righted itself, swerved once more and shot off the road; it tore through low underbrush, tipped again and settled slowly at an angle of ninety degrees against a tree. [. . .] then he saw the car was in a stable position. (218-19)

Nicole prevents Dick from handling the steering wheel, and the car goes out of the lane and down a slope, getting caught in a tree and leaning at an angle of ninety degrees. Dick's son feels something ominous in such a terrible accident: "Lanier, not sure what had happened, but suspecting the dark and unprecedented" (219). Dick cannot afford to show more consideration for his patient Nicole; instead, he starts to hate Nicole, forgetting the relation between doctor and patient: "but the strained faces of the children, looking from parent to parent, made him want to grind her grinning mask into jelly" (219); "he was filled with a violent disgust that was not like anger" (219).

Owing to this accident, their car cannot return to the lane without the help of a tow truck. Dick asks his son to say to innkeeper Emile, "La voiture Divare est cassée" (219).[24] Even after Emile reaches there, Dick cannot bring the car back to its former condition yet, and only says to him,"never mind about the car" (220). Then, with an air of resignation, "they would wait for the chauffeur and the big car to pull it up onto the road" (220). Dick will entrust the car to others instead of restoring it by himself. In the accident, Nicole also rebels against Dick:

"her expression became defiant" (220). This accident does not only cause a change in his attitude toward Nicole, but also provokes their confrontation: "He and Nicole looked at each other directly, their eyes like blazing windows across a court of the same house" (219). The broken car cannot run if a wrecker does not tow it, and it suggests that their relationship is so broken that the Divers cannot repair it by themselves.

Conclusion

F. Scott Fitzgerald uses automobiles to show three conditions: 1) romance, 2) wealth, and 3) something ominous. First, he describes cars romantically as a means for amorous couples'relationships to progress rapidly, but also in some cases, as a venue for illicit affairs. Second, he describes automobiles as a token of the rich, bringing people at the bottom of the social scale into sharp contrast with the wealthy. Finally, he uses automobiles to reveal the negative side of life. They portend things violent and destructive, suggesting tragic developments and causing trauma and destruction of human relationships. In *This Side of Paradise*, the fatal accident of Amory's friend casts a dark shadow over his heart. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the car accident foreshadows the Patches' grim future. In *The Great Gatsby*, Myrtle's death in an accident engenders Gatsby's death, and his death leaves deep psychological scars in Nick's heart. In *Tender Is the Night*, an accident becomes a crucial event that causes the Divers'life to collapse.

It should also be noted that Fitzgerald's novels introduce the horrifying elements of car accidents repeatedly. Fitzgerald employs the same elements in his newer novel as those in his former ones. In *This Side of Paradise*, a drunken Dick Humbird drives carelessly and dies, with his body maimed seriously. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, the Patches' car is broken, and its transmission is ripped out of its body, only to be later towed. In *The Great Gatsby*, two car accidents by Tom and a drunken driver at Gatsby's party and Jordan's careless driving prefigure the Myrtle accident. In the Owl Eyes accident, his car wheel spins off its chassis; in Tom's car accident, his car's front wheel is separated and the passenger is injured, and the trouble is written up in the press; Jordan's car almost hits a pedestrian. Daisy drives carelessly and runs over Myrtle. Myrtle's body is badly hurt: her breast is ripped from her body like a wheel torn off its body. The newspaper describes this car as a "death car" (107). Finally, in *Tender Is the Night*, the Divers' car breaks down, and it has to be towed. The Divers' relationship seems completely broken like the crashed car.

In Fitzgerald's work, it would be inappropriate to ascribe only one meaning to the automobile; actually, it is important to acknowledge that it has several meanings. While F. Scott Fitzgerald describes automobiles vividly and romantically as a symbol of the new age, he places characters in horrible accident scenes. Romantic scenes are always next to cruel ones. Fitzgerald is fully aware of the effect of automobiles; therefore, he describes something ominous with automobiles inside a single story repeatedly and introduces car accidents in his novels repeatedly. It is no exaggeration to conclude that his work could not be appreciated without noting the role of automobiles.

Notes

[1] The changes were, for example, “the pattern of spending,” “social mobility,” “the love life of the young,” “the divorce rate,” and “crime” (Jenkins 34).

[2] Some scholars think that the cream car and the Rolls-Royce are different.

[3] Chrysler absorbed Dodge in 1928.

[4] Fitzgerald’s friend Ernest Hemingway caused a car accident on 1 November 1930, and this event is mentioned in his letter to Fitzgerald (Hemingway 339-40).

[5] Also in the entry of July of 1910, “Mr. Shotwell killed” is described, but the sentence is stroked out (Fitzgerald, *Ledger* 164).

[6] The car accident occurred in St. Paul, Minnesota on Sunday, 22 May 1910, and on the next day, Fitzgerald’s testimony about it appeared in *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (Page 56-7; Workman 90). Mr. Shotwell died 22 days after the accident. Four months after the accident, in “Sept [the Fitzgeralds] Moved to Shotwell’s house, 509 Holly Ave” (Fitzgerald, *Ledger* 165). “The Fitzgeralds might well have aggravated their son’s ability to cope with their neighbor’s violent death” (Workman 93). See also Michael Workman’s “Infusive ‘Spots of Time.’”

[7] The “first” is not appropriate, because Fitzgerald’s “first encounter with violent death” was Shotwell’s in 1910.

[8] Short stories in which car accidents occur are, for example, “Six of One—” (1932), “The Family Bus” (1933), “The Long Way Out” (1937), and “Strange Sanctuary” (1939), and “Two Old-Timers” (1941).

[9] This description was transplanted in “The Rubber Cheque” (1932). See p. 28 of it.

[10] In Fitzgerald’s work, such as *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*, busses seem to play the role of mere public transportation, not rooms for romance. There is no bus in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*.

[11] A Buick is parked at the hotel.

[12] The cream color is often discussed. Cream color is a near-synonym for yellow; yellow becomes the “symbol of money, the crass materialism that corrupts the dream and ultimately destroys it” (Schneider 145), and “both yellow and gold are applied predominantly to West Egg and in particular to Gatsby” (Elmore 435). The car’s “rich cream color” results from the “combination of the white of the dream [Gatsby’s] and the yellow of money, of reality in a narrow sense” (Seiters 58). After Myrtle’s death, his car is described as “a yellow car. [. . .] Big yellow car. New” (109). Therefore, since “White, the color of the dream, has been removed from the mixture,” yellow “becomes purely and simply corruption” (Seiters 58).

[13] According to Thorstein Veblen, “Conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure. As wealth accumulates on his hands, his own unaided effort will not avail to suffi-

ciently put his opulence in evidence by this method. The aid of friends and competitors is therefore brought in by resorting to the giving of valuable presents and expensive feasts and entertainments" (75).

[14] Ernest Lockridge argues that Daisy has an intent to kill Myrtle: "Daisy turns back toward Myrtle and deliberately runs her down"; "Myrtle is no stranger to Daisy; Daisy knows precisely who she is. And Myrtle's death is no accident. It is murder" (174).

[15] The following explanation applies to Dick Diver: "Those who stand near the higher and the highest grades of the wealthy leisure class, in point of birth, or in point of wealth, or both, outrank the remoter-born and the pecuniarily weaker. These lower grades, especially the impecunious, or marginal, gentlemen of leisure, affiliate themselves by a system of dependence or fealty to the great ones; by so doing they gain an increment of repute, or of the means with which to lead a life of leisure, from their patron" (Veblen 77).

[16] The Patches' travel mirrors an actual trip by the Fitzgeralds. In 1920, Fitzgerald traveled through the South in his car with his wife Zelda, and a picture taken still remains. They named the car "Rolling Junk" (West 20).

[17] Although the origin of the name Jordan Baker cannot be identified, it is often said to be a combination of automobiles, car manufacturers, or automobile-related enterprises: two automobiles (Lehan 88; Whitley 52), a sports car Jordan and a Baker Electric, the latter of which was "a short-lived car made around the turn of the century" (Corrigan 156); two car manufacturers the Jordan Motor Car Company and Studebaker in the 1920s or the Baker Electric. Jordan Baker may have originated from "the Jordan 'Playboy' and Baker 'Fastex' Velvet, a luxury upholstery fabric for automobiles" (MacPhee 208).

[18] The accident is often discussed with the Myrtle accident; for example, "The habit of irresponsibility implied here obviously parallels this event with the car accident fatal to Mrs. Wilson at the climax of *The Great Gatsby*—but the prevailing ludicrousness of the incident at Gatsby's gives way to a prevailing seriousness in the later incident, the complementary tones defining the grotesque effect of this controlling element in the novel's structure" (Babb 341).

[19] Hearses were originally towed by horses, but in the 1920s, they became motorized.

[20] Like Amory Blaine, Fitzgerald could not forget the old car accidents: "Locating a biographical source for Amory's vision allows readers to understand that Fitzgerald might be novelistically attempting, psychologically, to deal with his own traumatizing loss of Stuart Shotwell Jr., of Bob Sniffin, and of Charlie Wiegand" (Workman 103); "Horrified and traumatized, Amory understandably feels undeniable revulsion facing down Humbird the Humbug into whose spectral appearance Fitzgerald cast the middle-aged copper trader Shotwell in the guise of the Devil in consequent iterations of the manuscript of his first novel" (104).

[21] The car accident caused by young people reminds some of an accident in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, which was published in the same year as *The Great Gatsby*. In Book 1, a poor missionary's son named Clyde Griffiths, who works as a hotel bellboy in Chicago, and his friend make a drive. His friend

causes an accident, and they all run away. This episode reveals an unprincipled life by wild and irresponsible youths.

[22] Dick Humbird's death is often connected with Amory's (or Fitzgerald's) psychological trauma: the Humbird episode makes Amory "[connect] sex not only with evil but also with death" (Miller 30); "The dead Dick Humbird's returning as a demonic apparition as Amory takes part in a drunken debauch in New York makes even clearer the connection between Humbird's death in a car accident and Fitzgerald's feminine brand of evil" (Clark 43).

[23] Nick's character is often discussed with his car; for example,"His modest and functional automobile reflects his own sense of satisfaction with his family background and his temporary economic situation" (Lance 27).

[24] "'The Divers'car is broken' (French). Diver pronounces his surname as a Frenchman would" (Bruccoli and Baughman 123).

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【Abstract】

F・スコット・フィッツジェラルドの長編における自動車の３つの働き

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F・スコット・フィッツジェラルドは、長編において、自動車を３つの目的で用いている。まず、彼は自動車をロマンティックに描くことで、カップルの関係を劇的に発展させようとしている。そして時にはその空間が不倫の関係をもたらす場所になる。次に、彼は自動車を金持ちの証しとして描き、それによって社会の底辺で奮闘する人々とその生活を浮かび上がらせようとしている。そして最後に、彼は人生の負の側面を明らかにしようとしている。事故はある種の暴力であり、破壊をもたらす。それは悲劇的な展開を示唆し、トラウマや人間関係の破壊をもたらす。さらに、フィッツジェラルドの長編では、自動車事故の恐ろしい要素が繰り返されている。フィッツジェラルドは自動車の効果を十分に認識しているからこそ、彼は一つの作品内だけでなく、複数の長編に渡ってそのような事故を繰り返し取り入れている。したがって、自動車の働きに注目することになしに、彼の作品を解釈することはできないと言える。

キーワード：F・スコット・フィッツジェラルド、比喩としての自動車、車、不注意、文学における交通事故

This paper examines the author F. Scott Fitzgerald who uses automobiles for three purposes in his novels: *This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby*, and *Tender Is the Night*. First, he describes cars romantically so that couples'relationships can develop rapidly. However, in some cases, they also provide venues for adultery. Second, he describes automobiles as a token of the rich, thereby bringing people at the bottom of the social scale into sharper focus. Finally, he reveals the negative side of life through automobiles. They sometimes cause violent and destructive accidents, suggesting tragic developments and producing trauma and the destruction of human relationships. It should also be noted that, in Fitzgerald's novels, the same horrifying elements in car accidents are introduced repeatedly. His works cannot be appreciated without paying attention to the roles of automobiles.

Key words: F. Scott Fitzgerald, automobiles, cars as metaphors, carelessness, traffic accidents in literature

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